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ABSTRACT

Two models for determining the composition of educational leadership teams and providing for their training are described. The Educational Team Variable Model has three dimensions: 1) team composition, e.g., principals, teachers, students, or community members; 2) time constraints, e.g., full-time team commitment or nonscheduled sporadic team commitment; 3) scope of impact, e.g., single building impact or district-wide impact. By selecting appropriate variables from each dimension, a team may be composed to suit the unique requirements of each situation. The Team Training Model also has three dimensions: 1) training responsibility, e.g., participating school district personnel, state department of education personnel, or cooperating university personnel; 2) training site, e.g., district level, university level, or outside organization; 3) training timeframe, e.g., on-the-job released time or leave of absence. Several different formats selected from this model are briefly outlined. (RT)

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Project Kansas 76: Concept Paper

Alternative Team Approaches To Promote Educational Leadership

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The formulation of educational teams composed of individuals possessing diverse skills, backgrounds and qualifications has received considerable attention and garnered substantial support during the past decade.[1] There have nevertheless been surprisingly few serious attempts to articulate, classify or categorize in any systematic fashion the variety of team models which appear applicable at the elementary and secondary school level. Those efforts which have been made in this regard have tended to focus primarily on somewhat narrowly defined team-teaching and administrator-teacher team approaches having an impact at the single building level.[2] Some, again limited, attention has also been given to administrative team models comprised of middle-management, predominately central office, personnel.[3] Models suggesting the inclusion of students, professionals from outside the field of education, or community representatives as viable decision making participants on a leadership team have not, however, received a wide hearing. The reasons for omitting such participants from consideration are often understandable, if not condoned! Negotiated contract restrictions encountered in trying to employ professionals trained outside schools of education as members of an educational team often render such an effort difficult if not entirely prohibitive. The involvement of students as full-time team members is questionable if for no other reason than simply from the

SP005370

standpoint of how much time such students can reasonably be expected to devote to team related activities while pursuing a regular program of study. The inclusion of community members as decision making equals among certificated professionals has the potential of raising questions of propriety, at least in the minds of some certificated personnel.

Given the seeming reservations just mentioned, it is also nevertheless becoming evident that decision making autonomy by teachers and administrators is increasingly being questioned, more and more often by articulate and vehement spokesmen.[4] Educational leadership teams composed of individuals representing a wide spectrum of "interest groups" are one way to assist in democratizing the process of educational decision making.[5] The ultimate, and perhaps even short term, value of such democratization is, of course, open to continuous discussion and debate. Nor does the existence of educational leadership teams necessarily imply a more democratic procedure for making educational decisions; such teams can be confined to the implementation of already defined policies. The full impact and potential of a "team approach" can only be fairly examined, however, when a complete range of alternative team models are available for consideration and comparison. In the comments which follow, one approach to defining a more comprehensive range of alternative team models is presented. In addition, a training model for educational teams is also discussed.

Conceptual Model of Selected Team Variables

The model presented in Figure 1 depicts a three-dimensional representation of selected "key" variables needed to comprehensively describe potential education-

al team approaches. The model incorporates three basic sets of variables: (i) team composition; (ii) time constraints; and (iii) scope of impact. Subsumed under each of these rubrics are specific team variables which can be organized into any number of team permutations. Included in this matrix of variables are the following:

Team Composition

1. Central Office Staff
2. Building Principals
3. Assistant Principals
4. Special Staff Personnel
5. Teachers
6. Students
7. "Outside" Professionals
8. Community Members
9. University Consultants

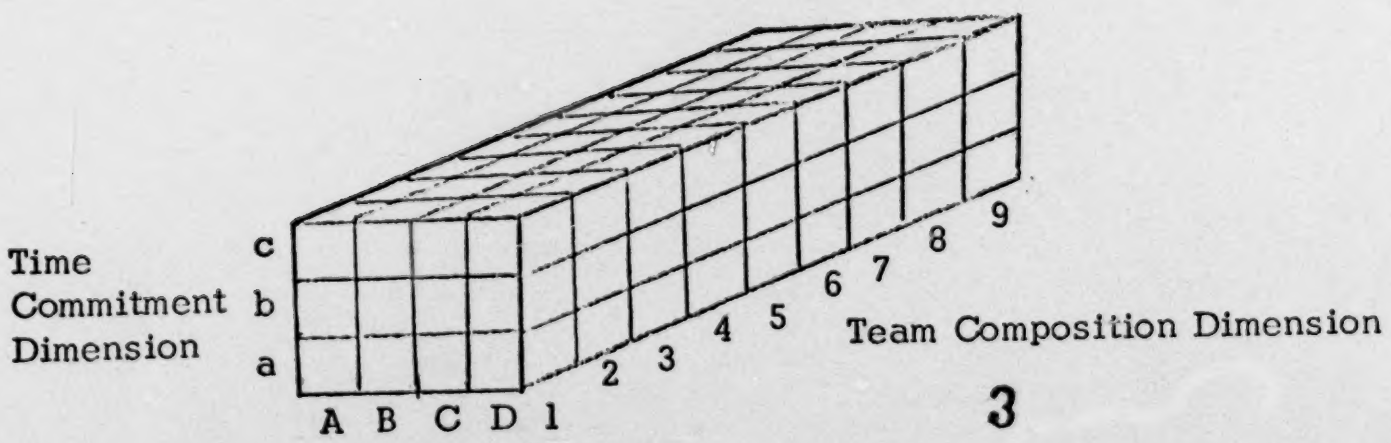
Time Constraints

a. Full-time team commitment
b. Periodic scheduled team commitment
c. Nonscheduled sporadic team commitment

Scope of Impact

A. Single Building Impact
B. Restricted Multi-building Impact
C. District-wide Impact
D. Multi-organizational Impact

Figure 1
Model of Key Educational Team Variables



Given the matrix of team variables suggested in this model, an almost inexhaustible series of team approaches can be developed. For the sake of illustration, consider the brief examples outlined below.

Team Configuration Examples

One team approach not given particular emphasis previously, but certainly feasible given this model, can be identified by the following variable permutation: (3,5,8,a,B). Such a team would consist of several building level assistant principals, teachers from each building, and community members again perhaps representing each of several buildings. The team would be committed to a full-time team activity operational format, and would be involved in cooperative activities having a multi-building impact. Another potential team approach might be identified on the basis of the following variable mix: (2,7,9,b,C). In this example, a regularly scheduled periodic team meeting between building principals, "outside" professionals, and university consulting personnel might be arranged to provide inservice training in non-educational management techniques. Yet another team might consist quite simply of the following combination of variables: (5,6,c,A). Teachers and students, in this example, would be organized as an identifiable team within one building, and would meet on a sporadic (as needed) basis.

It should be noted that what is suggested by the team variable model is only the structural components of potential educational teams; the purpose for organizing any particular team remains an open question, best resolved by the unique condi-

tions of each situation. In addition, the model does not attempt to prescribe any optimal total length of time that a team should remain an intact organizational unit. In this context, however, it is interesting to note that a team approach lends itself readily to the concept of a "disposable organization," an organizational format that has received recent attention.[6]

Team Training Model

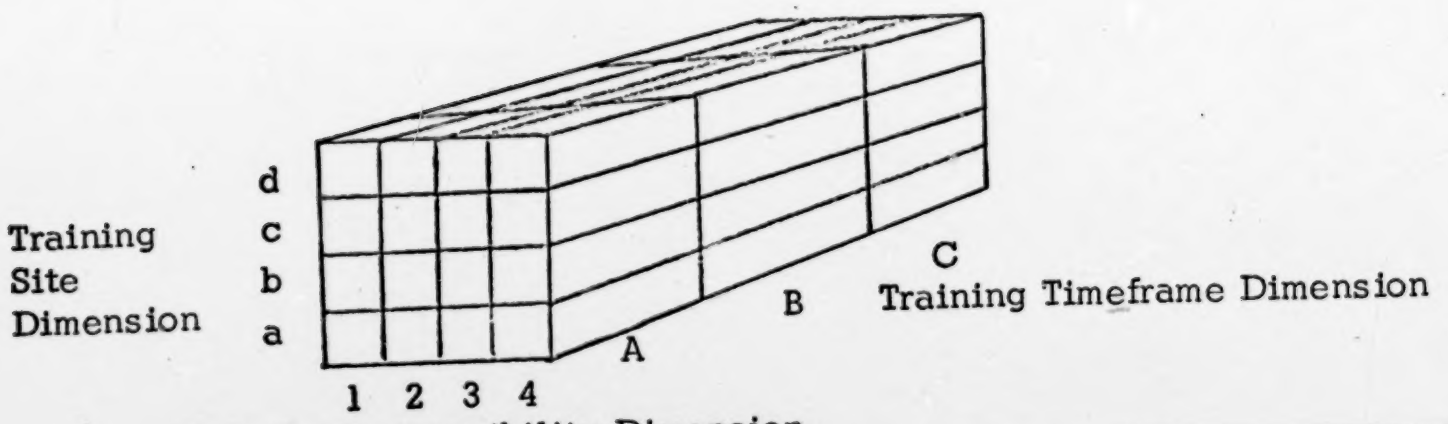
To suggest a procedure for describing potential educational team approaches is but the initial task of what should be a total application package which can realistically be implemented. A second task entails the development of a well-defined training program to adequately prepare team members to function within a given team configuration. The Team Training Model presented in Figure 2 is intended to conceptually meet this requirement. The model incorporates three training components: (i) training responsibility; (ii) training site; and (iii) training timeframe. As with the Educational Team Variable model, specific training items are subsumed under each of the general headings. Included in this matrix are the following items:

Training Responsibility
1. Participating School District Personnel
2. State Department of Education Personnel
3. Private Organization Personnel
4. Cooperating University Personnel

Training Site
a. District Level Training
b. University Level Training
c. State Department of Education Training
d. Outside Resource Training

Training Timeframe
A. Compressed Blocks of Released-time
B. On-the-job Integrated Released-time
C. Leave-of-absence

Figure 2
Team Training Model



Team Training Examples

The Team Training Model presented in Figure 2 implies several anticipated changes in current procedures for training personnel for new or redefined positions of educational leadership. Traditionally, institutions of higher learning have prepared educational practitioners, State Departments of Education have certified them, and school districts have employed them. This has often resulted, however, in a fragmented approach to educational personnel training and placement. Given variations suggested by the above Team Training Model, a more integrated and cooperative training format is feasible. To clarify the manner in which cooperative training programs can be generated using the model, several examples are provided below:

1. Inservice Cooperative Training Responsibility Format: This training format might be identified in the following manner (2,3,4,c,d,A), and should perhaps be considered a viable training package most applicable to building level administra-

tive personnel. In effect, personnel representing a State Department of Education, local or regional private business or service organizations, and cooperating universities would in a coordinated fashion provide a training experience for school district personnel. This training would, in the format suggested, take place at the State Department of Education and at one or perhaps several private business or public service organizations. District personnel participating in the training program would be allowed several compressed blocks of released-time, perhaps consisting of two or three days each.

2. Inservice University-School District Workshop Format: This training format can be identified by the following mix of variables (1,2,a,B), and would seem appropriate for either certificated or noncertificated personnel. Given this format, individuals from the district would plan a workshop with the assistance of cooperating university personnel. The workshop would be conducted within the district, and participants would perhaps attend workshop sessions for two or three hours a day over a period of several days, thus permitting ongoing school activities to continue in at least a quasi-normal fashion.

3. Complex District Renewal Format: This training program design involves a combination of all variables included in the model, resulting in the following rather cumbersome identification key: (1,2,3,4,a,b,c,d, A,B,C). In this design, personnel from a wide variety of organizations would cooperatively plan a training package, to be conducted at several sites, and potentially involving both inservice and preservice participants.[7] Such a training program might well be conducted over a two or three year period of time, and could, of course, be broken into smaller conceptual training units.

It is obvious that many of the training configurations that might be developed using the Team Training Model are neither new nor unique, although certainly some training approaches may possess both of these characteristics. The same thing may be said in reference to the Educational Team Variable model. Both models nevertheless do have a common feature; they permit a concise conceptual frame of reference by which educational leadership planning can be facilitated.

NOTES

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6. E.G. Bogue, "Disposable Organizations," Phi Delta Kappan, October, 1971, pp. 94-96.

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